United Nations A/C.3/62/L.91

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
21 November 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Third Committee
Agenda items 128 and 70 (b)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.44

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

I. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.44, the General Assembly would reiterate its request to the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide additional funds and human resources within existing resources of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to enable the Subregionial Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa to respond positively and effectively to the growing needs in the promotion and protection of human rights and in developing a culture of democracy and the rule of law in the Central African subregion.

II. Activities by which the proposed requests would be carried out

2. The Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa was established in 2001 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/55 A at the request of the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and operates under the auspices of OHCHR. The Centre became

07-60901 (E) 231107

fully operational in March 2001 and has entered its sixth year of operation. The Centre has developed a three-year strategy for 2007-2009 based on the OHCHR strategic management plan, which aims at strengthening existing partnerships and collaboration with the United Nations country teams, States members of ECCAS, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and the media to promote and protect human rights and democracy in Central Africa. For the biennium 2008-2009, the Centre will pursue the implementation of this strategy through the following thematic priorities drawn from the strategic management plan: impunity, discrimination and the fight against poverty. It will concentrate its work on the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, countries in which OHCHR does not have a field presence, as well as in Cameroon. In addition, the Centre plans to work on the following thematic areas in compliance with its democracy mandate: democracy deficit, conflict prevention, transitional justice and peacebuilding. In view of the successful deployment of two Associate Experts (Junior Professional Officers) to the Centre in 2007, no request for Professional posts was made in the proposed programme budget for 2008-2009.

3. Subsequent to the review of the proposed programme budget for 2008-2009 and based on the request of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for additional information concerning the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/158, by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide additional funds and human resources within the existing Office of the High Commissioner to enable the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa to respond positively and effectively to the growing needs in the promotion and protection of human rights and in developing a culture of democracy and the rule of law in the Central African subregion, OHCHR carried out a review of the resources proposed for the Centre for the biennium 2008-2009. In carrying out its review and bearing in mind the recommendation of the Advisory Committee in paragraph VI.18 of its report (A/62/7) the Office concluded that with additional resources, the Centre would foster OHCHR country engagement in focus countries by engaging further with the United Nations country teams, assisting countries in following up on the concluding observations of treaty bodies and the recommendations of thematic mandate holders, and would advocate for the implementation of ratified international human rights instruments. During the biennium 2008-2009, the Centre is, inter alia, expected to increase its involvement in raising awareness on the human rights of marginalized groups, especially those of minorities, indigenous people and women. The Centre's activities are therefore expected to be fully implemented with the support of the proposed new resources discussed below to work on issues such as the human rights of minorities and indigenous people in the Central African subregion.

III. Modifications required in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

4. Adoption of the draft resolution would not give rise to modifications of the programmed outputs under section 23, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (A/62/6 (Sect. 23)).

IV. Additional requirements for the biennium 2008-2009

5. The current staffing of the Centre comprises three international Professional staff financed from the regular budget (1 Senior Human Rights Officer, at the P-5 level; 1 Regional Adviser on Democracy, at the P-4 level; and 1 Human Rights Officer, at the P-3 level), as well as three local staff under general temporary assistance (1 National Officer/Documentalist; 1 Administrative and Finance Assistant; and 1 Driver/Messenger). The Centre is also funded by extrabudgetary resources, i.e., the National Officer post of Communications and Media Officer as of October 2007 and two human rights Associate Experts. This current level of resources, as proposed in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, is considered insufficient to allow the Centre to implement the activities detailed in paragraphs 2 and 3 above. In order to respond to the provision of operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution the following additional resources amounting to $520,100 would be proposed for the Centre under section 23, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009:

(a) Staff requirements ($381,100):

(i) New posts ($178,200): 1 P-3 Human Rights Officer and 1 Local level post for a driver;

(ii) Conversion of 3 Local level positions, currently funded from general temporary assistance, to established posts for one Documentalist, one Administrative and Finance Assistant and one Driver/Messenger ($123,300);

(iii) Conversion of 1 National Officer post, currently funded from extrabudgetary resources, to serve as Communications and Media Officer ($79,600);

(b) Non-post requirements ($139,000). Additional requirements are proposed to provide for: 2 subregional seminars on the rights of minorities and cultural diversity, respectively, for 20 participants ($80,000): vehicles including security equipment ($35,000); furniture and equipment for new staff and upgrading the Centre telecommunications equipment ($14,000); and staff travel within the subregion ($10,000).

6. Furthermore, an amount of $53,500 under section 35, Staff assessment, would be required, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.

7. The creation of the additional international Professional post would strengthen the Centre's capacity to ensure full implementation of the three-year strategic plan for 2007-2009, which places an emphasis on bridging human rights gaps in focus countries of the Central African subregion in which OHCHR does not have an operational presence. Furthermore, as requested in operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.44, the additional human resources enumerated above would enable the Centre to respond positively and effectively to the growing needs in the promotion and protection of human rights and in developing a culture of democracy and the rule of law in the Central African subregion.

V. Potential for absorption

8. No provision has been made under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 in relation to the activities that would be requested under the draft resolution. It is not possible at this stage to identify activities within section 23, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium to meet the additional requirement.

9. With regard to operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, the Committee's attention is drawn to the provisions of section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, in which the Assembly reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters, and also reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

VI. Contingency fund

10. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditure derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditures were proposed that exceeded the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or the modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

VII. Conclusion

11. **Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.44, additional resources totalling $573,600 would be required under section 23, Human rights ($520,100), and under section 35, Staff assessment ($53,500), to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. This would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require additional appropriations under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 to be approved by the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.**